

What is claimed is:

1. A medical device comprising:  
an elongated member configured to be advanced along a vascular path  
5 of a patient, the elongated member having opposite first and second ends, the  
first end and second ends both being adapted for intravascular insertion, and  
the first end having a different structure than the second end.
2. The medical device of claim 1, wherein the first end has a structure  
10 adapted to a different operating characteristic than the second end.
3. The medical device of claim 1, wherein the first and second ends have  
different flexibilities.
- 15 4. The medical device of claim 1, wherein the elongated member  
comprises a catheter.
5. The medical device of claim 4, wherein the first end of the elongated  
member includes an indwelling medical device delivery structure, and the  
20 second end of the elongated member includes an indwelling medical device  
retrieval structure.
6. The medical device of claim 5, wherein the first end comprises a  
delivery sheath, and the second end comprises a retrieval sheath.  
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7. The medical device of claim 6, wherein the delivery sheath comprises at  
least one sidewall port adapted for receiving a wire.
8. The medical device of claim 6, wherein the delivery sheath comprises  
30 first and second sidewall ports adapted for receiving wires.

9. The medical device of claim 8, wherein the side wall ports are skived.
10. The medical device of claim 8, wherein the distance from the first sidewall port to the first end is less than the distance from the second sidewall port to the first end, the elongate member comprises a lumen between the first end of the elongate member and the first and second sidewall ports, the lumen having a first diameter at the first sidewall port and a second, reduced diameter at a point between the first and second sidewall ports.
11. The medical device of claim 6, wherein the retrieval sheath comprises a rolled tip.
12. An assembly comprising a guide wire and a medical device of claim 1.
13. An assembly comprising an embolic protection device and a medical device of claim 1.
14. An assembly of claim 13, further comprising a guide wire.
15. An assembly of claim 13, wherein the embolic protection device is adapted to be delivered and retrieved by the elongate member.
16. A method for positioning a medical device within a patient's blood vessel, the method comprising:
- providing a medical device of claim 1; and
- advancing the medical device to a target site within the patient's blood vessel.

17. A method for positioning a catheter within a patient's blood vessel, the method comprising:

providing a catheter comprising an elongated member configured to be advanced along a vascular path of a patient, the elongated member having  
5 opposite first and second ends, the first end and second ends both being adapted for intravascular insertion, the first end comprising a delivery sheath, the second end comprising a retrieval sheath, the delivery sheath comprising at least one sidewall port adapted for receiving a wire, and the catheter having a lumen between the first end and the at least one sidewall port;

10 providing a guide wire having a proximal end and a distal end;  
advancing the guide wire to a target site within the patient's blood vessel; and

advancing the catheter over the guide wire by inserting the guide wire through the catheter lumen between the first end and the at least one sidewall  
15 port.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein an embolic protection device is loaded into the catheter prior to advancing the catheter over the guide wire.

20 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the catheter is advanced over the guide wire to a treatment site, the guide wire is removed, and the embolic protection device is advanced out of the catheter.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the delivery sheath comprises first and  
25 second sidewall ports adapted for receiving wires.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the distance from the first sidewall port to the first end is less than the distance from the second sidewall port to the first end, the lumen extends between the first end of the elongate member and  
30 the first and second sidewall ports, the lumen having a first diameter at the first

sidewall port and a second, reduced diameter at a point between the first and second sidewall ports.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the embolic protection device is  
5 loaded in the lumen between the first and second sidewall ports.

23. A guide wire loading assist device comprising:  
a member having a proximal first and a distal second end and a lumen  
therebetween, the lumen being adapted to encase a catheter having a sidewall  
10 port adapted for receiving a wire; and  
a sidewall port in the member adapted for receiving a wire,  
wherein the lumen of the member has a first axial orientation from the  
proximal first end to the sidewall port of the member and a second axial  
orientation from the sidewall port of the member to the distal second end, the  
15 different axial orientations forming a bend in the lumen near the sidewall port,  
the sidewall port of the member being adapted to be coincident with the  
sidewall port of the catheter.

24. The guide wire loading assist device of claim 23, wherein the member  
20 comprises a cylindrical portion disposed from the proximal first end of the  
member to the sidewall port and the cylindrical portion comprises a slit  
disposed from the proximal first end of the member to the sidewall port, the slit  
allowing removal of the guide wire loading assist device after the guide wire  
has been introduced into the catheter.

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